— To uphold our strategic interests in the global framework of nations in the southern continent and the surrounding oceans expressed through our consultative status in the Antarctic Treaty.

— To provide a platform to facilitate the Indian scientists to conduct contemporary research using Antarctica as a uniquely places laboratory by adopting a multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary approach on a national level.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. It is planned to launch XXII expedition to Antarctica during the year 2002-2003. All logistics and scientific preparations have already been started for this expedition.

Sub-ways at **railway level crossings**

†3221. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway level crossings without gates, throughout the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that the bridges or sub-ways are proposed to be constructed on all such crossings;

(c) if so, the time-schedule fixed for completion of such construction work on unmanned railway crossings, and the budget provisions made therefor;

(d) whether any co-operation is proposed to be sought from the State Governments also; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) The number of Railway level crossings without gates throughout the country is 21792.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.